

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 19, 21 – 24, 39 – 44, 46, 54 and 57 are currently pending in the application. Reconsideration of the rejected claims in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the indication that claims 19 – 23, 45 and 46 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By this amendment, Applicants have incorporated the features of allowable claim 20 into independent claim 1, incorporated the features of allowable claim 45 into independent claim 39 and presented allowable claims 19, 21 and 46 in independent form including the features of the respective independent claims and any intervening claims. Additionally, Applicants have amended claims 24 and 43 to preserve antecedent basis. Accordingly, Applicants believe that all the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

In response to the Reasons for Allowance, Applicants wish to clarify the record with respect to the basis for the patentability of claims in the present application. In this regard, Applicants do not disagree with the Examiner's indication that certain identified features are not disclosed by the references of record. However, Applicants further wish to clarify that the claims in the present application recite a combination of features, and the basis for patentability of these claims is based upon the totality of the features recited therein.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejection

Claims 1 – 18, 24 – 35, 37 – 44 and 54 - 57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) for being anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 7,176,508 issued to Joshi et al. (“Joshi”). By this amendment, independent claims 1 and 39 have been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter of claims 20 and 45, respectively, allowable claims 19, 21 and 46 have been amended into independent form including the features of the respective independent claim and any intervening claims, and claims 25 – 35, 37, 38, 55 and 56 have been canceled from further consideration in this application without prejudice. Thus, Applicants submit that the rejection is now moot in view of the above amendment.

Applicants are not conceding in this application that these claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue this and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1 – 18, 24 – 35, 37 – 44 and 54 - 57 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicants hereby make a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 09-0456.

Respectfully submitted,
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